(b) if so, Government's response to the Pak move with the UN?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government has seen identical letters dated 19th August 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council to this effect. India's position has been consistent. Under the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, both India and Pakistan are committed to addressing all issues bilaterally. Government has also maintained that the UN has no role in this regard.

China's stand on Sikkim

1778. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that China has struck off Sikkim as an independent country by removing it from its official website, taking a key steps towards resolution of their lingering border dispute; and

(b) if so, the current status of the border talks between China and India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Following the understandings reached during Prime Minister's visit to China in June 2003, a process has been started by which Sikkim will cease to be an issue in India-China relations. It has been noticed that some objectionable references to Sikkim have been removed from the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

(b) During the visit of Prime Minister to China in June, 2003, both India and China reiterated their readiness to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution of the boundary question through consultations on an equal footing. It was agreed that pending an ultimate solution, the two countries would work together to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and continue to implement the agreements signed for this purpose, including for the clarification of the Line of Actual

Control. The two sides also agreed to each appoint a Special Representative to explore from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship the framework of a boundary settlement. The two Special Representatives (National Security Advisor from our side, and senior-most Vice Foreign Minister, Dai Bingguo from the Chinese side) had their first meeting in New Delhi from 23 to 24 October, 2003. They have agreed to meet again on mutually acceptable dates in Beijing.

Removal of ban from over flight to Pakistan

1779. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has lifted the ban on Indian over flights; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including the date of journey and time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) During the technical level talks on the resumption of Civil Aviation links that were held on New Delhi on 1 December, 2003, India and Pakistan agreed to resume simultaneous direct air links and overflights with effect from 1 January, 2004 on a reciprocal basis.

Discussion with Myanmar

1780. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:
SHRI LALIT SURI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the topics on which discussions were held by the Governments of India and Myanmar recently;

(b) the decisions taken as a result of the discussions held; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government to implement the decisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) The Vice President made an offiicial visit to Myanmar from 2-5 November, 2003. Earlier Foreign